

EVERYWHEN ART ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Sonia Kurarra



Skin: Nampiyinti
Language: Walmajarri
Country: Noonkanbah
DOB: c. 1952

Sonia Kurarra grew up in the river country at Yungngora (Noonkanbah). She used to help the kindergarten teacher with teaching art. They used to take the children out to the Sandy Billabong and teach them how to paint and dance. There is a *ngarrangkarni* [Dreamtime] snake that lives in the billabong. His name is Nangurra.

Sonia began painting at Mangkaja in the early 1990s working mostly on paper. Since 2008, Sonia has been working predominantly on canvas and her practice has become more consistent. She has exhibited in numerous group shows and had an overwhelming response to her first solo shows in 2009.

Sonia paints the sandy billabong country along the stretch of the Fitzroy River that runs directly behind the community. After the flood waters recede, there are billabongs that hold a plentiful supply of *parlka* [barramundi], *kurlumajarti* [catfish] and bream. She paints *gapi* [fish], *parrmarr* [rocks] where the fish is cooked, *ngurti* [coolamon] and a *karli* [boomerang].

Sonia paints these images over and over as though they are etched into her psyche; works that are linear representations in monotones and others that are layers lathered on with wild and confident brush strokes. These contemporary compositions display an outstanding understanding of colour.

PAINTING THEMES:

Fitzroy River and billabongs near Yungngora (Noonkanbah) River behind Yungngora

AWARDS:

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

2016 Finalist – Port Hedland Art Awards
2015 Finalist – BankWest Art Prize
2015 Overall winner – Kimberley Art Prize
2012 Winner of Most Outstanding Work – Hedland Art Awards
2010 Winner of Best Indigenous work – WA Art Awards
2010 Winner of Best Indigenous work – Hedland Art Awards

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2022 Martuwarra, Sonia Kurarra Exhibition, Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
2022 Sonia Kurarra: Portals of Love and Loss, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth, WA
2016 *Sonia* Hanging Valley Gallery, Melbourne, Vic
2014 *Sonia Kurarra* Gabrielle Pizzi Gallery, Melbourne, Vic
2014 *Sonia Kurarra* Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
2013 *Sonia Kurarra* ReDot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore
2012/13 *Sonia Kurarra* Gabrielle Pizzi Gallery, Melbourne, Vic
2012 *Sonia Kurarra* Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney, NSW
2011 *Sonia Kurarra* FORM Gallery, Perth, WA
2010 *Sonia Kurarra* Randall Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
2009 *Sonia Kurarra* Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
2009 *Sonia Kurarra* Gallery Gondwana, Sydney, NSW
2009 *Sonia Kurarra* Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2019 Colours Of My Country, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC
2018 Wynne Prize Finalist, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW
2017 Mangkaja Artist – Tarnarnti, Art Gallery of South Australia, SA
2017 From Nature, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC
2017 Mangkaja Waters, Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2016 PINAKARRILUNY MARNALUNYA NGALIMPAKURA ARTISTS JARLU PALU WANTINYA, ReDot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore
2016 Gimme Shelter Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2016 Salon de Refuse Darwin, NT
2016 Entre Deux Eaux Bruxelles, Belgium
2016 Malpa Wirux Signal Point, Goolwa, SA
2016 Pinakarriluny Marnalunya Ngalimpakura Artists Jarlu Palu Wantinya ReDot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore
2015 Bankwest Art Prize Perth, WA
2015 Tarnathi 'Works of Significance' Tandanya, Adelaide, SA
2015 Salon de Refuse Darwin, NT
2015 Kimberley Art Prize Derby, WA
2014 Bankwest Art Prize Bankwest Art Gallery, Perth, WA
2013 Australian and Torres Strait Islander Award Museum of Northern Territory, Darwin, NT
2011 Sonia Kurarra and Cory Surprise Aboriginal and Pacific Art, NSW
2010 Living the Land, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC
2009 *Mangkaja Artists 60x60* Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
2009 *Sharing Difference on Common Ground* Holmes a Court Gallery, Perth, WA and Kimberley Aboriginal Artists

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2009 *Shalom Gamarada* Caspary Conference Centre, University of NSW
2009 *East Meets West* Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, NT
2009 *Senior Artists from Fitzroy Crossing* Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2009 *Mangkaja Survey Show* Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
2009 *Emerging and Re-emerging* Outstation, Darwin, NT
2009 *Margaret River Meets Fitzroy Crossing* Tunbridge Gallery, Margaret River, WA
2008 *Bendi Lango* The Indigenous Scholarship Fund, Sydney and Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2008 *Mangkaja Artists WA* Randell Lane Fine Art, WA
2008 *Women on Country* Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2008 *Divas of The Desert* Gallery Gondwana, Sydney, NSW
2008 *Marnintu Maparnana [Women Painting]* 2008 *Wet n' Wild* ReDot Gallery, Singapore
2007 *Bendi Lango* Artkelch, Freiburg, Germany
2007 The Indigenous Scholarship Fund, Sydney and Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2007 *Women Artists of Fitzroy Crossing* Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT
2003 *Water and Food* Cullity Gallery, University of Western Australia

COLLECTIONS:

The National Gallery of Victoria
The Art Gallery NSW
ArtBank
The Lepley Collection, Perth
Kerry Stokes Collection
Holmes a Court Collection, Perth
Geraldton Regional Art Gallery
Murdoch University Art Collection
Wesfarmers Collection of Australian Art
Peter and Agnes Cooke Collection
Bertrand Estrangin Collection

PUBLIC ART:

2010 Fitzroy Crossing Swimming Pool

PUBLICATIONS:

2009: Kimberley Aboriginal Artists
Sharing Difference on Common Ground
2003: Exhibition Catalogue Cullity Gallery UWA Perth/ Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency, *Martuwarra and Jila, Jumu, Jiwari and Wirrkujja*